



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0023

SUSAN A. GENDRON  
COMMISSIONER

EXHIBIT IV.A.

To: Members of the State Board of Education

From: Susan A. Gendron, Commissioner\*

Date: August 12, 2008

Subject: Major Capital School Construction Program; *Concept Approval Consideration*; Falmouth School Department, New Falmouth Elementary school construction project.

**STATEMENT OF FACT**

The Falmouth School Department construction project was rated number 19 on the 2004-2005 Approved Projects List. The school will house preK-5 students. The new school will house all students from the Plummer-Motz School, the Lunt School, and grade 5 students that currently attend the Falmouth Middle School.

A complete New vs. Renovation Study is on file with the Department of Education. The study confirmed that a renovation on the existing school site would have resulted in a school with both vehicular safety problems and inappropriate play and student circulation issues.

The new building has been designed to high performance school standards. All state and local agencies have been contacted; and where necessary, documented approvals are on file.

The new school has been designed to house 917 students and is located on the same site as the high school and middle school. The initial plan is to build a new biomass boiler and to heat the new school and the high school with the same unit.

Falmouth will propose to the voters that the municipality raise \$5,946,472. If approved the town would share in the site development costs, a larger gymnasium, a larger cafeteria, larger music spaces, three additional classrooms, and small discovery rooms throughout the building. The town will also be asked to participate in sustainable energy projects and upgrades in outdoor athletic facilities.

This Concept Approval is being requested pursuant to M.R.S.A. Title 20-A, Section 15905(1).

The Falmouth School Department School Department is requesting Concept Approval for a new elementary school qualifying under State statute and State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

**Superintendent Entwistle has provided the following statement:**

The Falmouth community is so pleased to be in partnership with the Department of Education to design an effective and long-term solution for our elementary students (pre K – 5). Scott Brown and his DOE and state associates have provided careful and excellent guidance to Falmouth's facilities team as we have navigated this very rigorous process. We are greatly appreciative of the support we have received on this project, as well, from Commissioner Gendron and from the State Board of Education.

A new pre-K through grade 5 elementary school for Falmouth resolves so many issues that have currently (and historically) negatively impacted both students and staff. The new elementary school additionally creates some wonderful new opportunities that were not foreseeable without this project. A "drive by" the Plummer-Motz and Lunt Schools in Falmouth might give the impression that our elementary students attend school in idyllic, historic and charming old school buildings. While indeed there are sections of each building that at least on the exterior fit this description, the larger sections of each of these buildings are either poorly constructed or temporary structures that have outlived their usefulness...presenting environmental and life-safety concerns, with deteriorating and/or obsolete physical systems along with inadequately sized/designed classroom and program space. The largest useable portion of the Lunt School, for example, consists of modular classroom units that have already exceeded normal 'life expectancy' for such temporary space. The campus that houses both the Lunt and Plummer-Motz Schools has inherent limitations which preclude full use of the available land and presents significant challenges to ensuring a safe and secure campus setting. Just outside, along one of the perimeter sides of this campus, is an intersection designated by the Maine Department of Transportation as a 'high crash zone' intersection.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students were separated from the elementary school campus due to overcrowded conditions at Lunt and Plummer Motz and they were moved to the Falmouth Middle School (formerly the Falmouth High School)...the best solution at the time. The Falmouth Middle School has its own issues with overcrowding, deteriorating modular units and aging/ailing systems and structures. While the school community has made the best of this situation it has philosophically remained committed to inclusion of grade 5 as a key membership group of our elementary student population. The new Falmouth Elementary School will allow us to bring our 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their teachers back to join their respective elementary cohorts and there is great excitement about this future reunion! The movement of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade out of the middle school will also create some much needed relief in terms of reducing the overall population and space demands on an overburdened school structure that was originally designed for a high school population. Philosophically, the Falmouth school community believes in the tremendous value of offering a full-day program option for kindergarteners but we have been unable to offer full-day K because of the current space constraints in our schools. The Falmouth community is committed as well to offering programming on a Pre-K level but has not been afforded the opportunity to do so because of the unavailability of adequate and appropriate space. The new school will make both of these program options a reality!

The new Falmouth Elementary (Pre K – 5) School will be sited on the central school campus between the Falmouth Middle School and the Falmouth High School. This location makes both programmatic and practical sense and finally will bring Falmouth's students, Pre K – 12, together in a one-campus community. Through much effort and dedication of our faculty, many 'connections' among and between our elementary, middle and high school students have been initiated and nurtured...reading buddies, mentoring programs, cultural awareness activities, performing arts demonstrations, service learning

projects, etc...despite the physical separation created by the 2 campuses. With the placement of the new school, the challenges and inefficiencies associated with the multi-campus logistics go away.

Resolved also with one, central campus is the problem of program efficiencies being lost due to shared staff commuting between campuses. Add to this the new efficiencies gained in terms of sharing meeting and performance venues, centralizing student transportation to and from one campus, single campus maintenance and grounds-keeping, central food service distribution/coordination and even shared heating systems/back-up energy systems (planned as part of the construction project and funded as a local cost) and it is understandable why there is so much excitement and enthusiasm surrounding our new school planning.

Again, we in Falmouth are very grateful for this wonderful opportunity.

### **Project Information**

Project: Falmouth Elementary School  
Superintendent: George Entwistle  
Principal: John Falherty  
Architect: Rob Tillotson, Oak Point Associates  
School(s) to be closed: Plummer-Motz School and Lunt School

### **Project Budget Information**

Total Project Cost: \$46,234,545  
Local Only (no State participation): \$5,946,472  
Approved for State/Local Debt Service Subsidy: \$40,098,254  
Anticipated Maine High Performance Schools Energy Grant: \$189,819

## **CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

At its meeting on July 25, 2008, the Construction Committee gained consensus to recommend that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to the Falmouth School Department for a new preK-5 elementary school construction project located in Falmouth, Maine.

## **DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

The Commissioner recommends that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to Falmouth School Department for a new preK-5 elementary school in Falmouth, Maine, as a Major Capital School Construction Project and approve the concept budget as presented.\*\*

\*Prepared by the School Facilities Services Team

\*\*This approval constitutes Concept Approval. Final Funding Approval may be subject to adjustment under Section 10, Subsection 1, of the State Board of Education Rules for School Construction Projects, which states:

*“Final Funding Approval by the Commissioner establishes the Project Budget and takes place after construction bids have been received. At that time, the Commissioner may reduce the budget to finance the project, thus providing additional funds for other projects.”*